

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently amended): A method for modulating the immune system of an animal comprising:
growing bacteria in a medium;
exposing said bacteria to biological, chemical or physical stress for at least ~~two~~one or more sequential periods of stress wherein each period of stress is defined by a period of stress exposure of approximately 20 minutes or less so that the bacteria release a stress response product comprising stress response factors (SRFs);
separating said medium and SRFs from said bacteria to form a separated product;
filtering said separated product to remove substances having a molecular weight of greater than 10kDa to form a filtrate; and
administering said filtrate to said animal.

Claims 2-3 (Cancelled).

Claim 4 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein said medium comprises a non-nutritive saline media at pH values of 6.0 to 8.0.

Claim 5 (Previously presented): The method of claim 4 wherein said saline media is a phosphate-buffered saline having a pH of about 7.0.

Claim 6 (Currently amended): The method of claim 1 wherein the bacteria are selected from the group consisting of ~~Lactobacillus, Staphylococcus, Streptococcus, Pediococcus, Pseudomonas, Bacillus, Escherichia, Listeria, Enterococcus, and Klebsiella~~ Lactobacillus, Staphylococcus, Streptococcus, Pediococcus, Pseudomonas, Bacillus, Escherichia, Listeria, Enterococcus, and Klebsiella.

Claim 7 (Currently amended): The method of claim 6 wherein the bacteria are selected from the group consisting of ~~L.~~ Lactobacillus -acidophilus, ~~L.~~ Lactobacillus -caseii, ~~L.~~ Lactobacillus -fermentum, ~~L.~~ Lactobacillus -plantarum, ~~L.~~ Lactobacillus -monocytogenes, ~~S.~~ Staphylococcus -aureus, ~~S.~~ Salmonella typhimurium, ~~P.~~ Pediococcus -acidolactici, ~~B.~~ Bacillus coryneforme, ~~E.~~ Escherichia -coli, ~~E.~~ Enterococcus -faecium, ~~S.~~ Streptococcus -pyogenes, and ~~K.~~ Klebsiella -pneumoniae.

Claim 8 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the bacteria are propagated at a temperature ranging from approximately 22°C to approximately 37°C.

Claim 9 (Cancelled).

Claim 10 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the bacteria are exposed to a stress while they are in the stationary phase of their life cycle.

Claim 11 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the filtering step includes: passing said separated product through a 0.22 µm filter to form a sterilized product; and passing said sterilized product through a filter with a molecular weight cutoff of 10 kDa.

Claim 12 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the filtrate containing the stress response factors (SRFs) with a molecular weight less than 10kDa is administered to an animal selected from the group consisting of humans, poultry and livestock.

Claim 13 (Cancelled).

Claim 14 (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the stress response product is administered in a manner selected from the group consisting of orally, topically, and parenterally.

Claim 15 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the animal is administered stress response products having a weight of between 0.5 and 3 kDa.

Claim 16 (Original): The method of claim 1 wherein the stress response products are administered as an adjuvant for oral or parenteral vaccines.

Claim 17 (Previously presented): The method of claim 1 wherein the bacteria are exposed to at least two or more sequential periods of stress wherein each period of stress is approximately 10-20 minutes.

Claim 18 (Previously presented): The method of claim 17 wherein the bacteria are exposed to sequential periods of stress by transferring the bacteria from growth media into non-nutritive media in the initial period of stress, then subsequently transferring the bacteria to non-nutritive media in the sequential periods of stress.

Claim 19 (Previously presented): The method of claim 18 wherein the bacteria are exposed to three sequential periods of stress.